R E P O R T R E S U M E S

ED 020 973 UD 005 646

A SURVEY OF AMERICAN HISTORY INSTRUCTION FOR DISADVANTAGED YOUTH IN THE DETROIT PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

BY- WISNIEWSKI, RICHARD

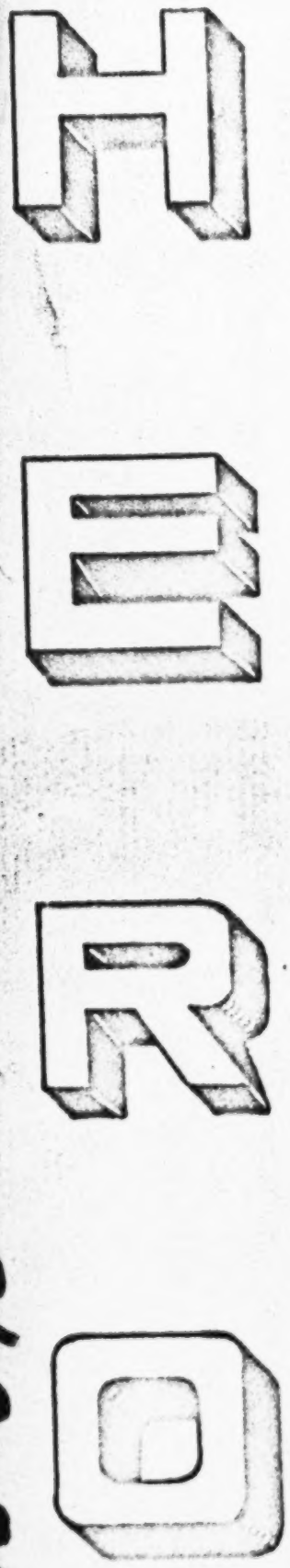
PUB DATE 64

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.25 HC-$0.88 20P.

DESCRIPTORS- *AMERICAN HISTORY, *HISTORY INSTRUCTION, *SCHOOL SURVEYS, *MINORITY GROUP CHILDREN, *RESEARCH METHODOLOGY, DISADVANTAGED GROUPS, URBAN AREAS, INTERVIEWS, TEACHERS, STUDENTS, ADMINISTRATIVE PERSONNEL, HISTORY TEXTBOOKS, AUDIOVISUAL AIDS, INSTRUCTIONAL INNOVATION, TEST RESULTS, DETROIT, MICHIGAN

OUTLINED ARE THE SURVEY PROCEDURES TO BE USED TO GATHER INFORMATION ON THE PRACTICES, PLANS, AND PROBLEMS RELATED TO THE IDENTIFICATION OF DISADVANTAGED, MINORITY GROUP CHILDREN WITH THE AMERICAN HISTORY TAUGHT IN THE DETROIT PUBLIC SCHOOLS. GENERAL PRACTICES AS WELL AS SPECIFIC PROGRAMS AND MATERIALS WILL BE SURVEYED. THE SURVEY PROCEDURE IS DESCRIBED IN TERMS OF THE COMPOSITION OF THE SURVEY TEAM, THE DATES AND ORGANIZATION OF THE OF THE SURVEY, AND THE SCHOOLS TO BE OBSERVED. INCLUDED IN THIS OUTLINE ARE THE INTERVIEW SCHEDULES FOR USE WITH ADMINISTRATIVE PERSONNEL, TEACHERS, AND STUDENTS AND THE QUESTIONS TO BE USED IN EVALUATING TEXTUAL AND AUDIOVISUAL MATERIALS. IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT DATA BE OBTAINED ON INNOVATIONS AND ON ACHIEVEMENT TEST SCORES. THIS ARTICLE IS PUBLISHED IN HISTORICAL EVALUATION AND RESEARCH ORGANIZATION, WASHINGTON, D.C., "HISTORY AND URBAN EDUCATION, A FIVE-CITY SURVEY PLAN, 1964-1965," 1964. (NH)

05613



HISTORY AND URBAN EDUCATION

A FIVE-CITY SURVEY PLAN
1964-1965

HISTORICAL EVALUATION AND RESEARCH ORGANIZATION
2233 WISCONSIN AVENUE, N.W.
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20007

ED 005 949

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL OFFICE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY.

A SURVEY OF AMERICAN HISTORY INSTRUCTION FOR DISADVANTAGED YOUTH IN THE DETROIT PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Prepared by

Dr. Richard Wisniewski
Wayne State University

UD 005 646

© Historical Evaluation and Research Organization, 1964

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS COPYRIGHTED MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY Historical Evaluation and Research Organization TO ERIC AND ORGANIZATIONS OPERATING UNDER AGREEMENTS WITH THE U.S. OFFICE OF EDUCATION. FURTHER REPRODUCTION OUTSIDE THE ERIC SYSTEM REQUIRES PERMISSION OF THE COPYRIGHT OWNER."

INTRODUCTION

Based on preliminary discussions between representatives of the Historical Evaluation and Research Organization with Dr. Samuel Brownell, Superintendent, Dr. Charles Wolfe, Assistant Superintendent, and Dr. Elmer Pflieger, Director of Social Studies, HERO is formulating plans for a survey of American history instruction and its impact on minority group, disadvantaged youth in the Detroit Public Schools.

It is anticipated that the survey will be replicated in Los Angeles, California, New York City, Phoenix, Arizona and Washington, D.C., with modifications necessitated by local conditions. The survey outlined in this document is designed for use only in Detroit.

The surveys planned for Detroit and the other school systems are designed to provide an empirical and current base of information in partial fulfillment of the broader objectives of the History and Urban Education study proposed by HERO. The overall objectives of the study are indicated in the following statements from the June, 1964 draft of the proposal discussed with the cooperating school systems:

> The objective of this proposal is to initiate a preliminary, descriptive study to develop a plan for long-term research and experimentation in the teaching of American history to underprivileged, minority group children in urban schools. The need for this study has emerged from the belief that most minority group children, and particularly those in poverty--Negro, Puerto Rican, Mexican-American, Asian-American, and American-Indian--lack identification with traditional, historical America.
>
> Historians believe that there is a pressing national need to stimulate new thinking about imaginative ways of presenting the American past for those who are handicapped by the limitations of environment and beset with the problems which arise from differences in social class, color, and ethnic groups, such as racism, delinquency, apathy, and anger.
>
> Accordingly, a long-term research project is contemplated in which historians, educators, and scholars in other academic disciplines will collaborate to make American history more meaningful to minority group city children who are isolated from the mainstream of American society.

This proposal elaborates a developmental effort, in the form of a descriptive study, which will provide a framework for long-term research.

The present document outlines a survey operation designed to gather information relevant to the above overall objectives. Specifically, the survey will seek to describe and document data on the practices, plans, and problems related to the identification of urban, minority group children with the teaching of American history in the Detroit Public Schools. The survey will seek to describe general practices as well as specific programs and/or materials designed for use with minority group children. Among the facets of the survey herein outlined are the following: the composition of the survey team; the dates for the survey; types of documents and instructional materials to be gathered; the types of schools to be visited; types of questions to be discussed with administrators, teachers, and students; and other related matters. It is recognized and fully intended that the survey will disrupt as little as possible the normal operation of the several schools that will be visited.

Comments and suggestions regarding all aspects of the survey, particularly in regard to overlooked opportunities for gathering data and insights, will be much appreciated.

COMPOSITION OF THE SURVEY TEAM

It is recommended that the survey team consists of four persons:

1. A representative from HERO (possibly Mary Hoyt or Trevor Dupuy).

2. A historian specializing in American history and having some knowledge of the Detroit Public Schools (possibly a member of Wayne State University's Dept. of History).

3. An educational consultant from one of the other cities being surveyed. (By including such a consultant, HERO will ensure that each educational consultant will have direct experience with at least two of the school systems being surveyed.)*

4. The local educational consultant (R. Wisniewski).

In addition to these four persons, one WSU graduate student will need to be hired for at least two days, as specified on page 14 of this document.

It is anticipated that the team will need at least three and one-half days to complete the observations and discussions appropriate to the study. The local educational consultant will assume the responsibility of coordinating all the activities with the Detroit Public Schools and for completing any aspects of the survey not completed within the 3½ day period.

It is anticipated, further, that the work of the team will be divided among its members. Thus, for example, a given school will be visited by only one or two members of the team so that: (1) the schools are not disturbed by the presence of the full team and (2) the number of schools to be visited may be increased.

---

*If this is not feasible or if a fifth member is desired, a person representing the social studies department of WSU or an officer of the Michigan Council for the Social Studies may be invited to participate.

DATES AND GENERAL ORGANIZATION OF THE SURVEY

In accordance with conversations with Dr. Pflieger and with Dr. Robert Lankton of the Detroit Public Schools, any three concurrent days of the week of October 19-29 are recommended for the survey.

The following chart suggests a tentative pattern for conducting the survey in three full days. (It is recommended that the team meet during the afternoon or evening of the day preceeding the survey to make final plans and to delegate responsibilities.)

First Day	Second Day	Third Day
8:00-2:30--Visit to three schools, one team member to each school. The 4th team member to visit other schools or facilities recommended by the Detroit Public Schools to see particular classes or programs designed for disadvantaged youth.	Same as first day, three different schools being visited.	Same as first day, three different schools being visited.
3:00-4:30--Conferences each day with divisions of the school system particularly concerned with the objectives of the study, i.e., Great Cities School Improvement Project, Human Relations Division, etc.		
Evening--Dinner conference with Dr. Brownell and/ or Dr. Wolfe and with Dr. Pflieger and his staff. (Div. of Social Studies).	Dinner conference with 6 or 7 highly competent teachers with much experience teaching minority group, disadvantaged youth.	Survey team meeting for the purpose of evaluating observations materials and conferences.

It is recommended, further, that the Franklin or Burton Elementary Schools be visited since both of them are engaged in implementing the Great Cities School Improvement Project. Other suggestions for special visits are anticipated from further discussions with Detroit Public School officials.

The final choice of schools is to be determined by the Detroit Public Schools, and each principal will decide as to the participation of his school in the study. The schools herein suggested are offered as being representative of the types of schools appropriate to the purpose of the study.

It is anticipated that each team member will discuss the purposes of the study with the school's principal and, in the case of junior and senior high schools, with the social studies department head; will observe two or three classes in American history; will chat informally with the teachers of these classes; will chat with two or three students; and will collect any materials, e.g., outlines, lists of readings, tests, etc. pertaining to American history which may be made available to him. Specific types of questions to be discussed are suggested under "Interviews," below. It is apparent that each school visit will be different from another and the team member will need to be flexible in terms of timing discussions and observations so as to see as much as possible without interfering with the usual routine in the school.

SCHOOL OBSERVATIONS

Detroit has almost 300 public schools, each of which offers instruction in American history either at grade 5, 7A-8B, and/or 11. In the brief time available for the survey, it is impossible to smaple more than a very small number of classes. Two major research decisions, therefore, are recommended:

1. The schools visited should serve areas of the city with high concentrations of minority group, disadvantaged children.

2. The schools observed should represent all three levels of instruction, i.e., elementary, junior high and high schools.

Accordingly, the following nine schools are recommended for team visits. An alternate school is noted (in parentheses) in the event that the first selection is for any reason not feasible.

Elementary Schools:

Marr (Roosevelt)
Foster (Bishop)
Owen (Irving)

Junior High Schools:

McMichael (Durfee)
Jefferson (Hutchins)
Pelham (Miller)

Senior High Schools:

Northwestern (Central)
Eastern (Northern)
Western (Northwestern)

All of these schools serve Negro children, the single largest disadvantaged group in Detroit. At least one of the schools serves Negro, southern white, and children from Spanish speaking backgrounds, i.e., Owen. Western serves Negro children as well as children from several ethnic backgrounds. Marr Elementary, McMichael Junior High and Northwestern High Schools have been selected because they are all on one campus, thus, offering an opportunity for observing American history instruction at all three levels for children from basically the same neighborhood.

In addition to these nine schools, it is recommended that one team member visit the Durfee Junior High School to observe a class where programmed instruction is being implemented with a group of children, many of whom come from a disadvantaged background.

INTERVIEWS

In the effort to gather all pertinent views and insights into the problems of teaching American history to disadvantaged youth, a number of interviews and conferences are integral to the survey operation. In addition to the several conferences with a number of school officials suggested in this document, three specific types of interviews are vital to the success of the survey. In each school to be visited, it is recommended that (1) each principal and social studies department head be interviewed, (2) at least two American history classes be observed, (3) the teachers of these classes be interviewed (as well as any other American history teachers who may be willing to take part), and (4) three children from each class be interviewed.

The following methodological recommendations are offered for consideration:

1. The structured, open-ended style of interviewing will probably be most conducive to obtaining the breadth of information desired.

2. A system of random selection needs to be devised for the purpose of choosing the classes to be observed. A team member might request, for example, to observe the first two American history classes of the day in each school. It is recognized, of course, that no observations will be made unless the teachers involved have agreed to participate in the survey.

3. The principle of randomness needs also to be applied in selecting three students in each class to be interviewed. For example, the 4th, 14th, and 24th student on the class roll might be invited to speak to the interviewer.

4. The form in which the questions are cast needs to be determined. Should the questions asked be very "open," e.g., "Which classes do you like best?", or should they be more "pointed," e.g., "What do you think of American history?" As will be noted, the questions outlined below are somewhat "pointed" in nature. It is incumbent on the HERO group of educational consultants to agree on a set of questions to be used in the interviews in all five cities so that coding the answers is facilitated and so that the inferences made have a higher degree of validity.

Since at least nine schools will be visited, it is anticipated that: (1) at least nine principals will be interviewed; (2) at least five or six social studies department heads will be interviewed; (3) at least 18 or more teachers will be interviewed; and (4) at least 27 students will be interviewed.

It is crucial that certain standard operating procedures be followed in all of the interview situations. For example:

1. The nature and purpose of the HERO survey should be briefly explained.
2. Absolute anonymity must be guaranteed and the interview should be held as privately as possible.
3. The same basic questions should be asked of each respondent.
4. While taping the interviews would be desirable, the final decision regarding taping is always left with each respondent.

The following questions are indicative of the types of questions that are probably appropriate to the purposes of the survey.

<u>Interviews with principals and/or social studies department heads</u>:

1. What is the general, socio-economic background of the children attending this school?

2. What percentage of the total group might be described as being children from disadvantaged, minority group backgrounds?

3. What is the pattern of social studies classes in this school?

4. Specifically, how much American history instruction do the children receive?

5. What is the general format and/or content of the American history classes?

6. To what degree is American history popular with the children?

7. To what degree do minority group children respond to American history?

8. To what extent do minority group children identify with the personalities, events, and movements

usually described in American history classes?

9. Are the available American history textual and audio-visual materials appropriate for use with disadvantaged children?

10. How are minority groups described in some of these materials?

11. How well prepared are your teachers for teaching American history?

12. How well prepared are your teachers for working with disadvantaged youth?

13. Have any of your teachers prepared any special materials or programs for use with disadvantaged children?

14. What types of test data are available on the abilities of your students?

15. Are the goals of HERO's study generally valid?

16. What recommendations would you make for improving the teaching of American history to minority group children?

Interviews with teachers:

1. What is the general socio-economic background of the children attending this school?

2. What percentage of the total group might be described as being children from disadvantaged, minority group backgrounds?

3. What other classes do you teach in addition to this course in American history?

4. Is American history a popular subject?

5. What are some of the content areas this class has been studying?

6. What are some of the books and other materials you have been using with this group?

7. What are some of your usual approaches to teaching American history, e.g., methods, assignments, etc.?

8. Have you copies of any tests, assignments, etc. that are representative of some of the things you usually do?

9. Are the methods you apply mainly different or mainly the same as the approaches used by other teachers of American history?

10. What are some of the problems in teaching American history?

11. To what degree do minority group children respond to American history?

12. To what degree do disadvantaged children identify with the persons and ideas of American history?

13. To what degree are the texts and other materials you use appropriate for use with disadvantaged youth?

14. How well prepared were you for teaching disadvantaged children?

15. Are the goals of HERO's study generally valid?

16. What recommendations would you make for improving the teaching of American history to minority group children?

Interviews with Students (The questions asked of students will need to be adjusted according to the age level of the respondent):

1. Which courses in school do you like the best?

2. Which courses in school do you like the least?

3. How many social studies courses have you taken?

4. Specifically, how much American history have you studied?

5. How do you feel about American history?

7. How do you feel about the books you've used in American history? Films? Records?

8. What are some of the things you've learned in American history? (Probe deeply in terms of

specific personalities, issues, etc. related to American history.)

9. How fairly do the books treat people from different racial, ethnic or religious groups?

10. Do you recall any discussions or explanations in any of your American history classes that you really felt were important?

11. Why do you suppose American history is a required course?

12. How could American history classes be improved?

TEXTUAL MATERIALS

The following questions indicate the basic facts that need to be determined in an analysis of the written materials being utilized by the Detroit Public Schools, especially as these materials are being used by teachers working with disadvantaged youth. The questions will be discussed with the staff of the Department of Social Studies. In addition, it will be desirable to obtain copies of all pertinent curriculum guides and courses of study distributed to teachers by the school system. (A beginning in this direction has already been made in a preliminary conference between HERO and members of the Dept. of Social Studies.)

1. Does the school system have any existent studies or surveys of the textual materials used in its social studies classes in general and in its American history classes in particular?

2. Whatever the answer to "1", we would need a listing of all the American history textbooks currently being used by the school system. The listing should include:

   a. Names and authors of the texts, publishers, and initial dates of publication or revision.

   b. Grade levels at which these texts are used. This information could be categorized under elementary, junior high and senior high headings.

   c. When was each of the texts adopted for use by the school system?

3. Is it the general practice of the school system that a textbook must be used in American history classes or is textbook adoption optional with individual schools or teachers?

4. Is more than one textbook available for a given class or level in American history, e.g., 11th grade American history? If "yes," what is the general practice for determining which text is used?

5. If more than one text is available for each American history class, which of the texts

listed in "2" above are most extensively used at the elementary, junior high and senior high levels?

6. Is it general practice for students to purchase their American history texts at the elementary, junior high and/or senior high levels?

7. What is the general procedure followed in selecting new American history texts by this school system?

   a. Nature of persons or committees involved.

   b. Is there a state listing of approved texts (or publishers)? If "yes," may we obtain a copy of the list?

8. In general, how long is a given American history text kept in use?

   a. Are there state or local regulations regarding this point? If "yes," specify briefly.

   b. In general, how often are reviews of texts initiated?

9. In addition to textbooks, what other types of written materials provided by the school system are in general use by teachers of American history? (Examples: manuals, study guides, special events publications, monographs, etc.)

10. To what extent does the school system develop textual materials in American history? What are some examples of this type of material?

11. Does the school library department of the school system have any information regarding the quantity and usage of American history supplementary materials available in school libraries?

12. Do the school libraries or the local public libraries offer any prepared lists on such topics as Negroes or other minority groups in American history?

13. Is any evidence available regarding the utilization of paperback books dealing with American history in the school system?

14. Are there any American history textbook changes or experimental textual materials being considered or being developed by the school system at this time? If "yes," please specify nature of change, type of materials, plans for utilization, and so on.

15. Specifically, are any special materials dealing with minority groups available for use in the system, and are any special materials for use with disadvantaged youth being utilized or developed?

16. Have there been any recent public discussions or debates regarding the use of any American history textual materials in this school system?

17. What recommendations would the Department make for improving materials to be used with disadvantaged youth?

AUDIO-VISUAL MATERIALS

Three major aduio-visual services are provided by the Detroit Public Schools: the Audio-Visual Department (films, filmstrips, recordings), the Children's Museum, and the school radio and TV stations. The following outline pertains to each of these services in turn.

Audio-Visual Department: In surveying the audio-visual materials available for use in American history classes, two basic facts must be determined?

1) The availability of American history films, filmstrips, and recordings.
2) The utilization of these materials.

Fact one may be readily determined by obtaining the most recent catalogs of available materials from the audio-visual department of the Detroit Public Schools.

Fact two will be more difficult to determine. Mr. Mudge of the Audio-Visual Dept. has suggested that it may be possible to scan the booking records for the school year 1963-64 in order to determine the most frequently ordered films, filmstrips, and recordings. (Ten of each type.) In addition, it will be possible to determine the American history audio-visual materials ordered by the several schools in which observations are to be made.

The booking files must be studied in their entirety, however, and the efforts of a graduate student for 2-3 full days will be required to accumulate the latter data.

Once the utilization facts are determined, it should also be possible to establish the producer, date of production and number of available copies of the most popular American history materials.

It would be desirable to schedule a conference with the director of the audio-visual department along with the staff of the Social Studies Department to discuss questions such as the following:

1. Are there any existent studies dealing with the utilization of audio-visual materials in Detroit, particularly in the social studies area?

2. What is the usual procedure in the selection of American history audio-visual materials?

a. Nature of persons or committees involved?
b. Is there any state or local listing of approved audio-visual materials? (If "yes," may we have a copy?)

3. Have there been any recent public discussions or debates regarding the use of any American history audio-visual materials?

4. Are there any new audio-visual American history materials currently being considered for purchase or development by the school system?

5. Are there any audio-visual materials being utilized or developed that are especially effective for use with disadvantaged youth?

6. What recommendations would the Department make for producing new American history materials to be used with disadvantaged, minority group children.

Children's Museum: Lists of the American history materials (pictures, models, objects, etc.) available on loan from the Children's Museum are readily available in the catalogs of this branch of the Detroit Public Schools.

In addition, information regarding the degree of utilization of these materials may be discussed with the Museum director. Especially useful will be any information or comments museum workers may have on the groups of children, especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds, who are brought to the museum and are perhaps shown things related to American history.

The School System's Radio and TV Stations: Listings of programs for the school year 1963-64 are available and can be scanned for American history content.

A conference with the director will provide information as to the content and utilization of these programs.

(It may be noted that a 9th grade World History TV course has been broadcast for several years to a number of Detroit junior and senior high schools and research on this effort is no doubt available. This information may be pertinent if these schools have a high percentage of disadvantaged children.)

INNOVATIONS

While the survey is designed to describe the existent pattern of American history instruction in the Detroit Public Schools, it is desirable that every effort be made to record and visit, if possible, any efforts that seek to better "reach" disadvantaged minority group children in the Detroit Schools. Hence, the Great Cities Project office needs to be contacted and any other special projects need to be investigated, e.g., programmed instruction in a social studies class at Durfee Junior High School. It is anticipated the team will be apprised of innovations in the course of its school visits and conferences.

STEP TEST SCORES

It is recommended that the STEP (Sequential Tests of Education Progress) social studies scores for each of the schools visited be obtained. The tests are normally given to all 10th and 12th graders in the Detroit Public Schools. It may be possible to compare these scores against an equal number of schools in more favored socio-economic areas in the city as well as against the national norms.

It is also recommended that a conference with Dr. Robert Lankton, director of the Division of Instructional Research, be scheduled to ascertain if any other test data or research studies bearing on the focus of the survey are available.

COSTS OF THE SURVEY

All costs of the survey, e.g., dinner conferences, transportation, etc., will be covered by HERO.

FINAL REPORT

All information, materials, and notes on observation, interviews, and conferences resulting from the survey will be analyzed by HERO and its staff of educational consultants. Early drafts of the final report will be sent to appropriate officials in the Detroit Public Schools for their review and comments. In addition, an advisory board made up of several faculty members of Wayne State University will review the final document.

No comparisons or judgments regarding the American history instruction in the cooperating school systems will be made. Rather, the final report will offer fully documented information on the American history programs in each city and on the identification of minority group, disadvantaged children with American history. The report will provide a current and empirical base for the long range research and developmental projects HERO anticipates will be forthcoming after the survey findings are disseminated.

A number of copies of the final report will be made available to each cooperating school system.